



Jocassee Journal

Information and News about the Jocassee Gorges

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A volunteer crew from the Foothills Trail Conference takes a break during a work day on the trail at Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve. Enjoying a well-earned lunch are (from left) Tom King, John Park with canine companion, Kate, and Dale Haman. (Photo by Heyward Douglass)

Popular Jocassee Gorges trail reconstruction now complete

Volunteers help to reopen Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve trail

The trail at Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve in northern Pickens County, damaged by a tropical storm nearly two years ago, has been reconstructed and is now open to hiking.

The popular trail at Eastatoee (also spelled Eastatoe) Creek Heritage Preserve—part of the Jim Timmerman Natural Resources Area at Jocassee Gorges and managed by the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR)—had been closed since September 2004 due to major damage from Hurricane Ivan. Numerous trees were toppled

during the storm, and several slid down the mountain, taking the trail with it in several places.

Trail re-construction was accomplished in a variety of ways: by volunteer help from Boy Scouts and the Foothills Trail Conference, by DNR staff including Rob Harrison and Tom Swaynham, and by a commercial trail construction outfit that was contracted to build about .5 of a mile of new trail. Among the many volunteers helping to reconstruct the trail were Heyward Douglass and John Bodine of the Foothills Trail Conference, Vic Shelburne, Sebastian Voss and other members of Scout Troop T-235 in Clemson, and Dave Alverson. Trail design expert Dr. Walt Cook, retired

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Grade of new trail to creek is more gradual

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University of Georgia forestry professor, planned the new trail route. The new trail initially follows the original trail route, but then it dramatically diverges from the original trail and eventually links hikers back to the designated primitive camping area alongside Eastatoee Creek.

Mary Bunch, Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve manager and DNR wildlife biologist, said: "The new section of trail includes a much more gradual descent to the creek, and it's a vast improvement over the original trail and should reduce trail maintenance considerably." The length of the trail, from the gate at Horsepasture Road, was increased in the reconstruction from the original 2.25 miles to its current 2.54 miles. Visitors are reminded to use only dead and downed wood for campfires and to camp at least 50 feet away from the creek.

The Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve Trail is a spur of the 77-mile Foothills Trail. Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve, a steep mountain gorge of 374 acres, features some older age-class trees, a rainbow trout stream, dramatic rock cliffs and rare ferns that are maintained by the creek's moist spray. Within the preserve, three streams—Laurel Branch, Side of Mountain Creek, and Rocky Bottom Creek—flow into Eastatoee Creek. The Eastatoee falls 600 feet in elevation to tumble across large rocks and boulders before roaring through a series of narrow channels aptly called "The Narrows." This turbulent water system generates a fine spray, which helps maintain high humidity along the Eastatoee. This high humidity enables three species of rare ferns to thrive. One of these, the Tunbridge fern, exists nowhere else in North America. Cove and upland hardwoods, including white, red, and chestnut oaks, hickories, magnolia, red maples, cucumber tree and black locusts, comprise the dominant forest type at the preserve. Spring wildflowers, such as bloodroot, are abundant at this preserve.

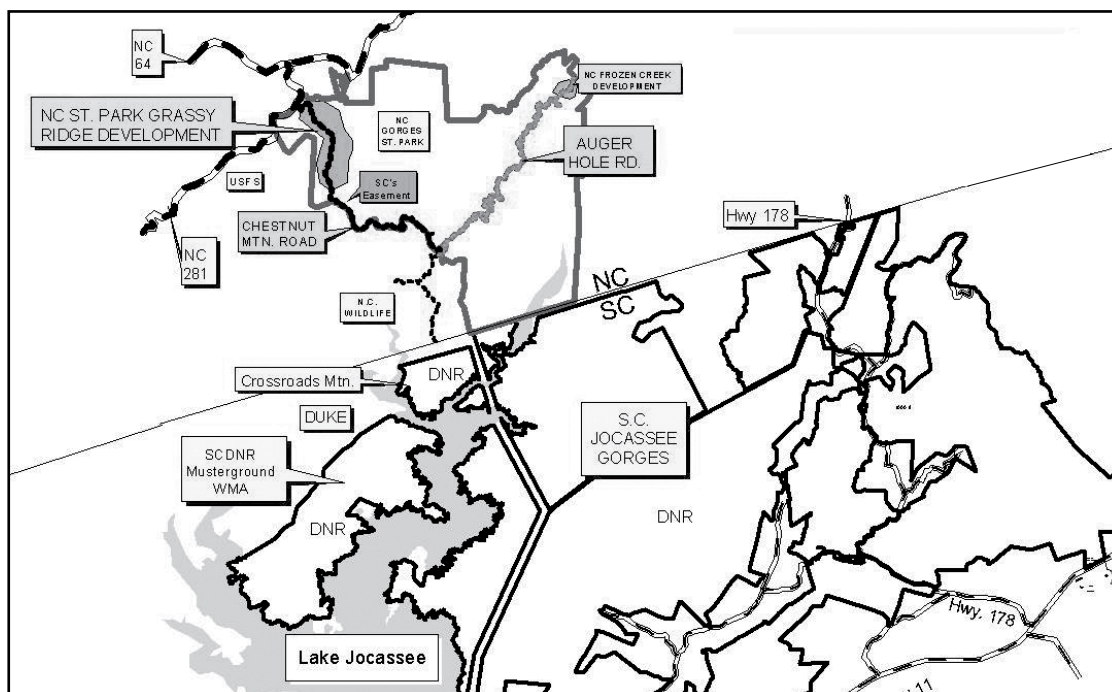
The Heritage Trust Advisory Board, which guides the DNR's Heritage Trust Program, approved funding from the Heritage Land Trust Fund to reconstruct the Eastatoee Creek trail. Funds from the Heritage Land Trust Fund are derived from a portion of the real estate documentary stamp tax, which is paid each time a real estate transaction is made. The fund is used only for the acquisition and management of significant natural and cultural resources in South Carolina. For more information



The Narrows is below the camping area that's at the end of the Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve trail. The Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve trail was recently reopened after being closed for nearly two years due to damage from a tropical storm. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)

on hiking in Jocassee Gorges, call the Clemson DNR office at (864) 654-1671, extension 22.

To get to Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve, begin at the intersection of SC 11, the Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway, and US 178, at Holly Springs Country Store. Take US 178 toward Rocky Bottom and Rosman, N.C. From the intersection with SC 11, it is 8.1 miles on US 178 until you will turn off into the hills. At 7.1 miles from SC 11, pass through the community of Rocky Bottom. Keep going for another mile on US 178, until you cross Eastatoee Creek on a concrete bridge. Turn left here on the gravel Horsepasture Road, at a sign for Laurel Valley Lodge. Take the right fork onto the gravel road; the lower paved road leads to the DNR's Jocassee Gorges field station and Laurel Valley Lodge. In about 400 meters, reach the Foothills Trail parking lot on the left. This is the best place to park. Walk by green gate on Horsepasture Road past the parking lot. In another 400 meters or so, reach Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve on the left. Walk behind red gate to begin trail. ❁



Map shows easement through North Carolina's Gorges State Park into South Carolina Jocassee Gorges property. (DNR map by Mark Hall)

N.C. access route to Jocassee identified

Road could provide access
for management, recreation

South Carolina officials recently discovered an easement through North Carolina to Jocassee Gorges lands that may provide management and recreational access to lands that had previously been nearly inaccessible.


South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff sifted through documents and searched the legal records in Transylvania County, N.C., to confirm the easement findings. South Carolina DNR holds a deeded easement that permits access from N.C. Highway 281, at the current parking lot for the North Carolina Gorges State Park. The route proceeds south on Chestnut Mountain Road, to a landmark known as Turkey Pen Gap, then it winds east through lands owned by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, then southeast across the North Carolina/South Carolina state line and into either the Crossroads Mountain or the Musterground portion of Jocassee.

Mark Hall, DNR's Jocassee Gorges manager, studied the North Carolina access route with North Carolina Gorges State Park Superintendent Steve Pagano. Pagano pointed out that South Carolina's access route would go right through the middle of Gorges State Park's planned \$7 million development of the Grassy Ridge area in North Carolina. Pagano was surprised to learn of the easement. Hall indicated that it would be preferable to avoid the state park development on Grassy Ridge and use an

alternate access route via the historical Auger Hole Road. The Auger Hole road would provide good access for heavy equipment, hemlock protection crews, prescribed burning crews as well as anglers, birdwatchers, campers, hikers, hunters, and other recreational users. South Carolina DNR developed a plan to give up the easement through Grassy Ridge, in exchange for an easement on the Auger Hole Road.

South Carolina DNR Director John E. Frampton recently discussed the matter with William Ross, director of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and they agreed that South Carolina DNR, North Carolina State Parks and North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission should work out details for access that would satisfy all parties involved.

In the interim, Gorges State Parks in North Carolina has agreed to allow hunters (as currently allowed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission) to access the South Carolina Jocassee Gorges lands by traveling via the Auger Hole Road. The Auger Hole Road is gated and requires a key, which can be checked out at the Gorges State Park headquarters in Sapphire, N.C., telephone (828) 966-9099.

In the near future, South Carolina DNR will work with the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources to hammer out a win-win solution for access and road maintenance in the area, Hall said. 

Feral hogs causing trouble in Jocassee Gorges

Swine damage sensitive plant communities, compete for food with native species

Feral hog numbers seem to be on the increase in the mountains and especially in the Jocassee Gorges.

Mark Hall, Jocassee land manager for the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR), reports that the hog sign he and his staff have noticed while working on Jocassee has quadrupled in the past couple of years.

The reason for the increase is not clear, but it is likely that many hogs have been illegally released on state and private lands by misguided individuals to create more hunting opportunities. Hog hunting is a popular sport in South Carolina, and although hunting is an important recreational activity on Jocassee, Hall said he plans to make certain that hog hunting does not become a trademark for Jocassee.

If left unchecked, feral hogs on Jocassee will cause irreparable damage to sensitive plant communities and result in unacceptable impacts on bear habitat.

“Hogs compete directly for the same food that bears eat, such as ants, salamanders, grubs, acorns and wild berries,” said Skip Still, DNR’s bear biologist. “Feral hogs have a reproductive capacity that is mind-boggling. A feral hog sow can produce 25 piglets a year, whereas a bear is lucky to average about one cub per year. Those staggering odds could jeopardize our bear population.”

Fortunately for Jocassee Gorges, land manager Hall is not a newcomer to wild hog control. He is an expert hog hunter and began his professional career with a successful feral hog eradication project in the Caribbean in the 1980s. He has handled feral hog control projects on the South Carolina coast and in the Congaree/Watercees swamp system over the past 20 years.


Hall and his crew of Jocassee Gorges wildlife technicians have implemented a plan to reduce the feral hog population on Jocassee with an aggressive trapping program. The program netted more than a dozen wild hogs on Jocassee in the first few weeks of trapping. “We will not tolerate the hogs rooting up sensitive ecosystems or acting like vacuum cleaners

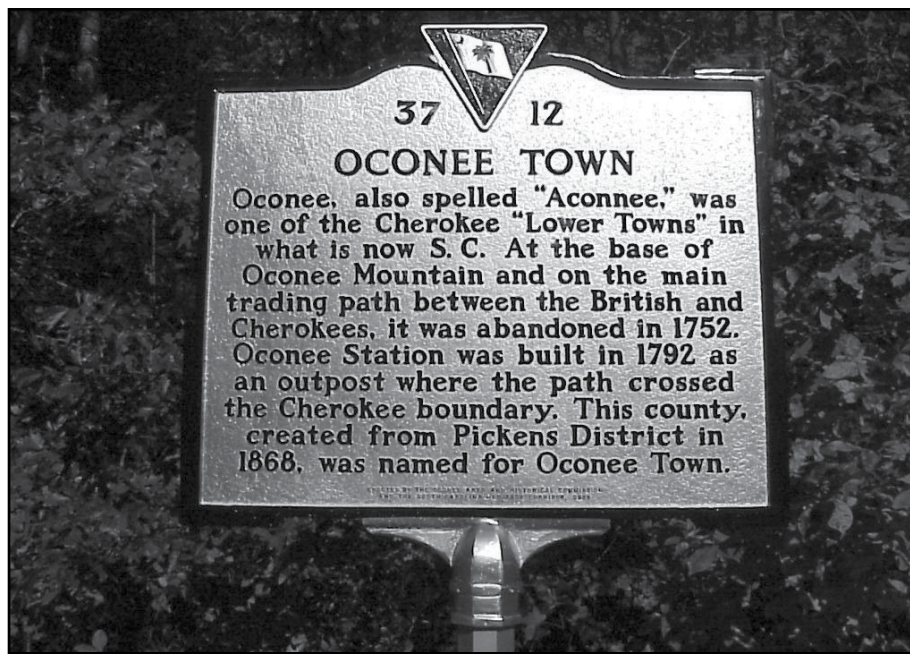


Numerous feral hogs have been trapped on Jocassee Gorges. The non-native hogs are extremely destructive to native plant communities and compete with wildlife species such as black bear for food. (DNR photo by Jimmy Kluge)

as they sweep up the food before the bears have a chance to feed naturally,” Hall said. “I have a lot of duties on Jocassee, but when they include getting rid of the hogs, it is like ‘throwing br’er rabbit in the briar patch.’ We’ll make sure that it is a waste of time and effort if folks continue to release hogs in the area.”

A few, isolated wild hogs have roamed the woodlands on Jocassee for many years. Those few, scattered individuals did not seem to pose as significant a threat as the small herds of swine that have been seen in the last couple of years. The scattered stragglers were probably the result of semi-domestic hogs that people used to tend in years gone by. Early settlers and farmers used to let their hogs run free in the woods to consume the bounty of the woodlands, and they would call them up regularly to feed them corn or food scraps so it would be easy to gather the hogs for market when they matured. The practice was outlawed when the “fence laws” were passed decades ago.

Hog numbers are generally on the increase in the United States. They take readily to the woodlands and cause disturbance to ecosystems wherever they thrive. They are extremely intelligent and have the propensity to reproduce and cause irreversible harm to forest and farmland in the Southeast. In Jocassee Gorges, DNR staff members will remain vigilant in their efforts to deter the impacts of wild hogs in order to guard the ecosystems they are charged with protecting. 



A historic marker for the Cherokee's Oconee Town was recently dedicated at Oconee Station State Historic Site in Oconee County. A series of historic markers are being placed in Oconee County to honor Cherokee heritage in the Upstate. (Photo by Luther Lyle)

Historic markers honor Cherokee towns

Landmarks recognize importance of Cherokee history to area

By Luther Lyle

The Oconee Arts and Historical Commission has partnered with the local chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Mountain Lakes (Region One) South Carolina national Heritage Corridor to recognize the Cherokee history and heritage of Oconee County and the Upstate.

Historic markers approved by the S.C. Department of Archives and History will be dedicated for: Tamasee Town, Keowee Town, Oconee Town, Jocassee Town and the Cherokee Boundary of 1777. The last three markers will be within the boundaries of state parks in the Upstate—Oconee Town in Oconee Station Historic Site, Jocassee Town in Devils Fork State Park, and the Cherokee Boundary in Oconee State Park. Dedication ceremonies are planned for the installation of each of these markers.

Several of these sites have special significance in the history of Oconee County and the State of South Carolina, as well as the United States. For example, Tamasee Town was the site of the "Ring Fight" where General Andrew Pickens and the South Carolina Militia defeated the Cherokee in 1776, which led to the Treaty of Dewitt's Corner wherein the Cherokee renounced their alliance to


the British and ceded most of their land in South Carolina.

Another site, Keowee Town, was the largest and most important of the Cherokee Lower Towns and was the intersection of the East-West and North-South trading paths. The British considered it important enough to build and man a fort there (Fort Prince George) to protect their trading interests and their alliance with the Cherokee.

Oconee Town was also on the Cherokee/British trading path, and its location later put it at the intersection of the trading path and the Cherokee Boundary. It was because of this strategic location that Oconee Station was built there by the South Carolina militia in 1792.

The Cherokee Boundary of 1777 was established by the Treaty of Dewitt's Corner and designated that the boundary line run from the North Carolina/South Carolina line "south-west over the top of Oconee Mountain till it shall strike Tugaloo River..." Oconee Mountain is the highest peak within Oconee State Park.

The Oconee Arts and Historical Commission are also republishing the pamphlet "Cherokee Indians in Upstate South Carolina" and will distribute these at welcome centers, museums and public schools.

(Luther Lyle is chairman of the Oconee Arts and Historical Commission and a teacher at Riverside Middle School in Pendleton.) 

Field Trip: Jumping Off

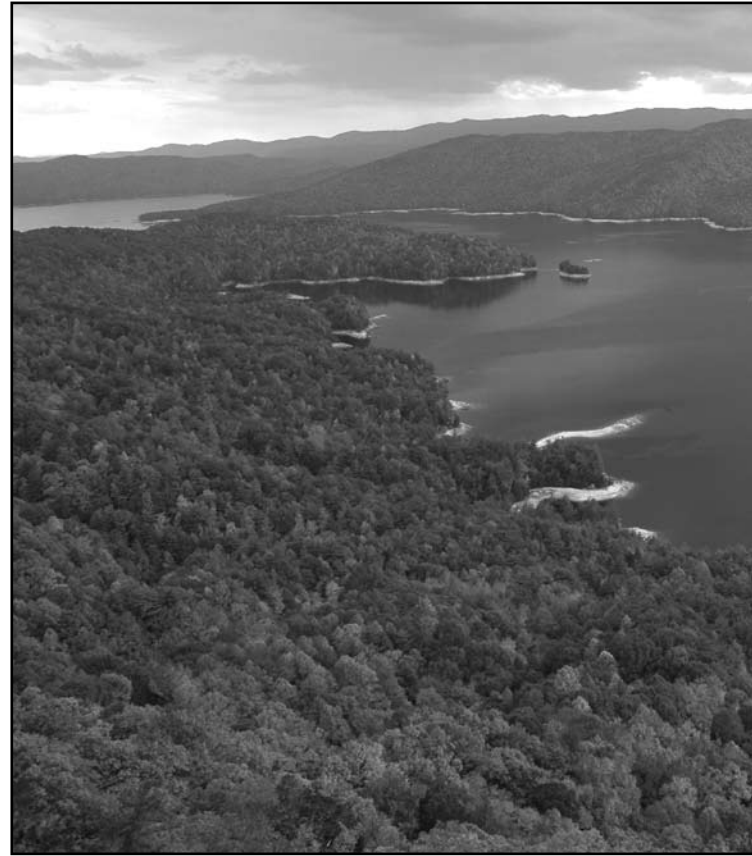
(The following article is reprinted with permission from the September-October 2006 issue of South Carolina Wildlife magazine. If you enjoy reading the Jocassee Journal newsletter, you NEED to subscribe to South Carolina Wildlife magazine! At only \$12 a year, it makes a great Christmas gift. To subscribe or to receive a catalog from the magazine's Wildlife Shop, call toll-free 1-888-644-9453 or visit www.scwildlife.com.)

Words cannot do the view at Jumping Off Rock justice. Photographs, as stunning as they may be, also do not suffice. This truly is one of those extraordinary places that you have to see to believe. Jumping Off Rock is also not an easy place to get to, so the view may be all the more appreciated for the effort that it takes to get there.

1) Jumping Off Rock, the hallmark view of the Jocassee Gorges, offers a stunning panorama of Lake Jocassee and the surrounding mountains. When seen in a photograph, the view looks like an image shot from an airplane. Jumping Off Rock is also one of those rare places in South Carolina where little of the hand of man can be seen for miles and miles. Ironically, Lake Jocassee, flooded in 1971 as part of the Keowee-Toxaway hydro project, is itself man-made—beneath the more than 300 feet of chilly, emerald-green waters lie the once free-flowing Toxaway, Horsepasture, Thompson and Whitewater rivers.

This journey begins at the intersection of SC Highway 11, the Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway, and US Highway 178, at Holly Springs Country Store. Many locals and visitors consider the popular general store as “Center of the Jocassee Universe,” at least on the Pickens County side. This is the last store you will see for quite some time, so if you need gasoline or snacks and drinks, definitely get them here.

Before leaving Holly Springs, make sure the vehicle you are using for this trip has adequate clearance. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are not necessary for the interior roads of Jocassee Gorges, as S.C. Department of Natural Resources wildlife technicians have done much to improve these roads during the past nine years. However, the roads are still primitive and not suitable for many vehicles. Plan on allowing at least a half-day for this voyage,



The view from Jumping Off Rock is unforgettable, but Jumping Off Rock is definitely one of them. (DNR)

even more if you want to explore a bit while you're up there.

Also check the date to make sure the gates are open to the interior Jocassee roads. The green gates are open for vehicles during the fall and winter, Sept. 15–Jan. 1, and again in the spring March 20–May 10. One of the reasons for the summer closure of roads to vehicles is to give wildlife populations, such as black bears and migratory songbirds, a break during summer breeding season. Of course, you can make this trip any time of year on foot, on mountain bike or on horseback. For stunning views all the way up the mountain, choose a date in winter or early spring when the leaves are off the trees.

Take US 178 toward Rocky Bottom and Rosman, N.C. From the intersection with SC 11, it is 8.1 miles on US 178 until we will turn off into the hills. Along the way, you will pass a sign on the right side of the road that says “Entering Jim Timmerman Natural Resources Area at Jocassee Gorges.” Timmerman, former director of the DNR who passed away Nov. 12, 2005, was one of the key figures in the state's acquisition of Jocassee Gorges in 1997. The 33,000-acre tract of land in South Carolina was named after him in 2000. Just past this

Rock offers spectacular view



Not many places are worth such a long drive to get to, photo by Greg Lucas)

sign on the right is Camp Adger Road, the eastern-most access to Jocassee Gorges.

2) At 7.1 miles from SC 11, pass through the sleepy community of Rocky Bottom. Keep going for another mile on US 178 until you cross Eastatoee Creek on a concrete bridge. Turn left here on the gravel Horsepasture Road, at a sign for Laurel Valley Lodge. (From where we turn off US 178, it is 9.8 miles to Jumping Off Road via Horsepasture Road.) Take the right fork onto the gravel road; the lower paved road leads to the DNR's Jocassee Gorges field station and Laurel Valley Lodge.

Be careful on the narrow Horsepasture Road—stay to the right side of the road, observe the 15-mile-per-hour speed limit, and be cautious driving around blind curves.

In about a quarter-mile, pass the Foothills Trail parking lot on the left. From here on the Foothills Trail, it is about 15 miles east to Table Rock State Park, and about 61 miles west to Oconee State Park. Continue through green gate on Horsepasture Road past the parking lot. In another quarter-mile or so, pass Eastatoee Creek Heritage Preserve on the left, another great destination for a field trip.

At about 3.6 miles from US 178, you will reach a fork in the road. Horsepasture Road is open year-round to this point. The left fork is a short dead-end road that can be used as a parking area. When you take the right fork uphill about 100 yards to Laurel Fork Gap, continue straight through a green gate across causeway. Note a sign on right for Laurel Fork Heritage Preserve. Grade of road steepens considerably for a short distance after Laurel Fork Gap.

Visitors will pass several red-gated roads on the way up to Jumping Off Rock. While these roads are not open to vehicles, they are available for non-motorized forms of travel such as hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding and are definitely worth exploring. Prescribed burning has been taking place along this stretch of Horsepasture Road. State land managers have reintroduced fire to the Jocassee region to improve wildlife habitat and reduce the danger of wildfire.

3) At 8 miles from US 178, the world seems to drop away on the right. This is the North Carolina Overlook. As stunning as this view is, you're still not to Jumping Off Rock yet, but pull over here and take a look. The S.C. Bear Hunters' Association recently erected a stone bench at this location. The dark green trees in the distance are Fraser firs, and these are growing near the Blue Ridge Parkway, which can be seen from the overlook even though it's about 40 miles away.

Dawkins Flat Road comes in from the right about a mile later. This road travels down to Laurel Fork Creek at the intersection with the Foothills Trail, and to within about a half-mile of Laurel Fork Falls.

Continuing on Horsepasture Road, Gantt Field campsite is just down the road on the right. This is an old home site, and a popular camping area for bear hunters during the black bear season the last two weeks of October. The distinctive dark green leaves of Oconee bells carpet a stream bank to the left of the road. The hallmark plant species of Jocassee Gorges, they bloom from mid-March to mid-April.

Just past Gantt Field is Bully Gap, and coming in from the left is Cane Creek Road. Remember this road, as we will take it on the return trip to make this something of a loop drive. At this point, we are about three-quarters of a mile from Jumping Off Rock. In about a half-mile, pass a helicopter-landing pad on the left. This large field could be used for choppers to touch down in case of wildfire or search-and-rescue operations.

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Osher Institute for Lifelong Learning at Clemson University participants admire the view at Jumping Off Rock during their annual fall pilgrimage to this Jocassee Gorges landmark. (DNR Photo by Greg Lucas)

You can see forever from Jumping Off Rock

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4) Another quarter-mile or so down the road, look for trails going off to the right and a small pull off area for vehicles, also on the right. You have finally arrived at Jumping Off Rock! Before heading out onto the rock face, be sure to warn family members and friends to exercise extreme caution—there are no cables or other barriers along the rock, and a fall from these heights would mean certain death.

The trail from the parking area leads to one end of Jumping Off Rock. This view is spectacular enough, but the view at the other end is even better. You can walk along the rock, but it's a safer walk to head up and through the woods. The view is, quite simply, breathtaking. The jewel that is Lake Jocassee is framed on all sides by an impressive array of mountains in both Carolinas and in Georgia.

No one knows for sure where the name Jumping Off Rock came from, but one of the popular derivations goes that a bear hound was in hot pursuit of a black bruin when the canine flew off the rock face.


5) After getting your fill of the magnificent view, turn your vehicle around and head back the way we came. After just a little more than a half-mile, turn right on Cane Creek Road. This way is not much shorter—9.3 miles to a paved road versus 9.8 miles via Horsepasture Road—but it does offer some different scenery on the return trip.

The only place where it is possible to take

a wrong turn on the return trip this way is at 7.1 miles from Jumping Off Rock. Here you will turn left from Cane Creek Road onto Shooting Tree Ridge Road. (No worries—if you keep following Cane Creek Road, it will dead-end, so you will have to turn around and go back.) A portion of the Shooting Tree Ridge section of Jocassee Gorges was logged in 2004 to thin out a pine plantation, and wildlife-viewing areas were established in some areas where Southern pine beetles had killed most of the trees. Some of this area underwent a prescribed burn in 2005.

At 9.3 miles from Jumping Off Rock, reach Cleo Chapman Highway, a paved road. Turn right on paved road and take first paved road to the left, then merge with Roy F. Jones Road, which will take you back to SC 11. Turn left on SC 11, and it is 4.9 miles back to the intersection of US 178 at Holly Springs Country Store, where our field trip began.

—Greg Lucas

(Greg Lucas, stationed at the S.C. Department of Natural Resources' Clemson office, is a conservation educator, recreation specialist and a field editor for South Carolina Wildlife magazine. Field Trip acknowledges with gratitude the assistance of Pickens County naturalist (and frequent SCW contributor) Dennis Chastain and the assistance of Clemson University student Boykin Lucas.) 

Review of Jocassee Gorges amphibians published

Publication highlights species that should receive further study

Dr. Richard Montanucci's excellent new review of Jocassee Gorges amphibians begins appropriately with a quote from John C. Sawhill, the late president and CEO of The Nature Conservancy: "In the end, our society will be defined not only by what we create, but by what we refuse to destroy."

With amphibians under siege from seemingly an endless assortment of man-made pitfalls, the publication of Montanucci's paper could not have been more timely. "A Review of the Amphibians of the Jim Timmerman Natural Resources Area, Oconee and Pickens Counties, South Carolina," appeared in *Southeastern Naturalist*, Volume 5, Monograph 1, 2006. *Southeastern Naturalist* is a quarterly, peer-reviewed and edited interdisciplinary natural history science journal with a regional focus on southeastern North America.

"This is not the final word on amphibians in Jocassee Gorges," said Montanucci, retired biological sciences professor at Clemson University. "Rather, this is the first step in gathering information on amphibians of this region, and suggesting some potential projects for future



Dr. Richard Montanucci is the author of a new review of Jocassee Gorges amphibians.

research. I'm hoping that herpetology students will find many future research projects in this amphibian review so that we can learn as much as possible about these important animals."

Commenting on Montanucci's work, amphibian expert Julian R. Harrison III, professor emeritus at the College of Charleston, said: "The subject matter...concerns the herpetology of a region of South Carolina that is of great interest to herpetologists because of its location in an area where the faunas of the Piedmont and Blue Ridge provinces meet and—in some cases—interact.

Montanucci settles to my satisfaction several of the puzzles involving some of the species that inhabit or were thought to inhabit this area and clearly indicates where additional research is required. In fact, the latter is an especially valuable contribution...The author mentions at least 16 specific instances involving the need for additional research, and all of these are justifiable and worthwhile."

To date, 13 species of salamanders and nine species of frogs and toads are recorded in the Jim Timmerman Natural Resources Area at Jocassee Gorges. Also, Montanucci reports that eight species of salamanders and five species of frogs are listed as potentially occurring within the boundaries of the property.

For more information on Montanucci's Jocassee Gorges amphibian review, call (864) 656-3625 or send an e-mail to rrmnt@clemson.edu. ❁

SC Studies features lessons on Blue Ridge

Other lessons look at Cherokee and Colonial history of area

SC Studies, a new program funded by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, uses thematic lessons designed specifically for the eighth-grade classroom to encourage sustained learning while implementing standards-based interdisciplinary curriculum materials that focus on South Carolina's natural history, human history, land use, literature, and culture. These lessons have now been released for general use in the classroom.

The program utilizes a variety of resources and materials to help teach eighth-grade students necessary skills in math, science, social studies and language arts. The ready-made lessons are meant to be taught such that the topics explored on a particular day in one core discipline generally relate to the same topic on that same day in each of the



other core disciplines, allowing students to make connections between the disciplines. One of the themes concentrates on the Blue Ridge region covering topics such as "A Mathematical Model of the Blue Ridge Landscape" and "Distinctive Fracture Patterns in the Blue Ridge." Other lessons in social studies and language arts look at the Cherokee and Colonial history of the area as well as various folklore and art of the region, such as quilting.

To view and download the SC Studies lessons, visit the Web site at <http://www.clemson.edu/scmaps/SCStudies/SCStudies.html>. Material lists for each of the lessons are provided so that they can be purchased directly. Material kits can also be rented from the SC MAPS Project Office at Clemson University.

For details on loan policies and costs, contact the SC MAPS Project Office by e-mail at scmaps@clemson.edu or by calling (864) 656-1560. ❁



Dr. Tim Spira of Clemson University talks to a group of South Carolina teachers about the natural history of Jocassee Gorges during an SC LIFE field trip to Twin Falls on Reedy Cove Creek in northern Pickens County. (Clemson University photo by Greg Yarrow)

South Carolina teachers visit Jocassee Gorges

Teachers learn about natural communities and how land is managed

By Tim Spira, Greg Yarrow and Joe Culin


This past summer, 14 South Carolina teachers and a naturalist from the Roper Mountain Science Center spent two days exploring Jocassee Gorges as part of a two-week course entitled “Natural History of Upstate South Carolina.”

Our objectives were to learn about representative plants and animals in their natural communities, discuss ways in which organisms adapt to their natural environments and discuss environmental concerns associated with managing natural resources. What better place to tackle these goals than Jocassee Gorges!

Highlights of the Gorges included a visit to Sassafras Mountain, the highest point in South Carolina at 3560 feet, where we explored an oak hickory forest and discussed the different watersheds on the mountaintop, pointing out how rain falling on the mountain, depending on which watershed it flows into, will eventually end up in Charleston, Savannah or New Orleans. We also discussed the restoration of trout habitat along the Reedy River Cove and observed woolly adelgids (a tiny aphid-like insect) feeding on the leaves of eastern hemlocks. As discussed in a recent issue of the Jocassee Journal (Spring/Summer 2006) woolly adelgids are threatening hemlocks in Jocassee Gorges and

throughout much of eastern North America. We also learned about the history of the Gorges, including how much of it was logged in the past (if you have a Singer sewing machine made between about 1940 and 1964, the wood for the cabinet likely came from trees harvested in this area). We also discussed the overall management plan for Jocassee Gorges including the role of prescribed burning to facilitate forest regeneration, improve wildlife habitat and to reduce the risk of a catastrophic crown fire.

Our final stop was perhaps the most spectacular– the overlook at Jumping Off Rock. This view of Lake Jocassee and the surrounding mountains provided the teachers with a vivid sense of the areas natural beauty and the important role it plays in providing habitat for our native plants and animals.

(Drs. Tim Spira, Greg Yarrow and Joe Culin of Clemson University were the lead instructors of the course described in this article. Additional individuals who contributed expertise at Jocassee Gorges were DNR staff Greg Lucas, Mark Hall and Tom Swaynham as well as local resident Dennis Chastain. This course is one of a number of life science and natural history graduate courses specifically designed for K-12 teachers and nonformal educators made possible through funding from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. Information on these courses can be found at www.clemson.edu/SCLife). 

Don't let stereotypes keep you from enjoying nature's beauty

An essay

By Dr. Walt Cook

Ah, stereotypes!! They make life so much easier. They take away the need to know the whole story. Most of us are guilty, at some point in our lives, of accepting the stereotypical image of another race, nationality, or region of the country. We even stereotype an entire state by our limited knowledge of its best-known part.

I admit to stereotyping, and it was all due to ignorance. While completing my forestry degree in New York, I applied for a teaching position to several universities. I wrote to Clemson (got an interview but no job) but didn't write to Georgia. In my ignorant mind, I envisioned Clemson as being close to North Carolina, which had the Appalachians, which was good. But Athens was in Georgia, a flat, hot stretch of the South, with nothing but pine trees and cotton. Who would want to live there? As it turned out, my only offer came from Georgia (they answered my tiny ad in the *Journal of Forestry*), so I took it—feeding a family of seven didn't allow for pickiness. And, I am overjoyed to say, after a year in Georgia, you couldn't have chased me out with a stick!

So, let's see what stereotypes Yankees, and even some natives, may have when South Carolina is mentioned. Hot, flat expanses of nothing interesting. Mountains? No, they are in North Carolina. The charming old city of Charleston is about the only attraction for a visitor.

Now you see how wrong it is to form a vision of a place, or a people, by restricting one's vision to common stereotypes. And that brings me to what is now one of my favorite places, but one I had absolutely no knowledge of—the Jocassee Gorges, and more broadly, the entire narrow band

of mountains along South Carolina's northwestern border. Flat? Is it flat? Not when I have to pull myself up a slope by grabbing the saplings above me. Not when I took a misstep and slid 25 feet downhill sitting down (very humiliating!). Uninteresting? No

way! Even discounting the tremendous views, cliffs, and beautiful waterfalls every few miles, the varied, attractive and often rare wildflowers are enough to make the area one of the most interesting places I've visited.

I first "discovered" this wild and beautiful part of the state by driving on US 25 from Greenville to Asheville. I wondered at the time why this large unpopulated area had not been developed; it wasn't in a national park or forest, not even in a state preserve. On the west, I had been

enjoying the Chattooga River's wildness by taking my recreation class there each April. I had heard about the Foothills Trail, the Blue Wall and its protector, Tommy Wyche, and I had canoe-camped on fiord-like Lake Jocassee before Devil's Fork State Park was developed. So, when I was asked to help monitor the design and construction of the Palmetto Trail west out of Table Rock State Park, I saw the opportunity to get into the core of the Jocassee Gorges and enjoy the flowers, the scenery, and the isolation it offers.

Now, four trails later, I still wonder why the area isn't overwhelmed by people and development. Let's enjoy it while we can, because once people discover South Carolina isn't all hot, flat and uninteresting, it will no longer stay "undiscovered." (Dr. Walt Cook is a retired forestry professor at the University of Georgia and an expert in trail design and construction. He helped design many of the new trails in Jocassee Gorges and improved some of the existing ones.) ❁



There is certainly much more to South Carolina than the stereotype of "hot, flat and uninteresting" as this photo of the Whitewater River along Coon Branch Natural Area illustrates. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)



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'Mammals and Their Skulls' interactive CD produced

Provides images, information on all mammals found in the Carolinas

A partnership involving Clemson University, Tennessee Tech University, U.S. Geological Survey, University of Tennessee and Great Smoky Mountains National Park have recently produced an electronic field guide in the form of an interactive CD that provides images and information on all 70-plus mammals found in the Carolinas.

The "Mammals and Their Skulls" CD has excellent digital images of all the mammals and also incorporates macrophotographs of the skulls of each species. The skull is shown in side view and in ventral views that allow the user the ability to differentiate important dental characteristics. Each skull view provides information on the important characteristics that aid in differentiating species.

A module in the interactive CD allows the

user to learn about the key skull characteristics that separate different mammalian groups such as the bats, rodents, carnivores, rabbits and insectivores. The user is provided technical information on each species. This information is found in sections entitled distribution, description of key physical characteristics, population biology, habitat and food preferences, habits, and size/weight of each species.

The CD was a collaborative effort between Edward Pivorun of Clemson University, Michael Harvey of Tennessee Tech University, Frank van Manen and Joseph Clark of U.S. Geological Survey, Michael Pelton of University of Tennessee, and Kim Delozier and Bill Stiver of Great Smoky Mountains

National Park.

For more information on the "Mammals and Their Skulls" interactive CD, call Pivorun at (864) 506-5706, (864) 656-3592 or send an e-mail to ebpvr@clemson.edu.



A new interactive CD features photos of more than 70 mammals found in both Carolinas.